

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON

S E C R E T STATE 064990

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT PARIS 7561 ACTION SECSTATE INFO RABAT ALGIERS
TUNIS NOUAKCHOTT TRIPOLI MADRID MOSCOW USUN NEW YORK MAR 13.

QUOTE: S E C R E T PARIS 07561

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, AG, CU, LY, UR, FR

SUBJECT: REPORTED ARRIVAL OF CUBANS AND ARMS IN ALGERIA

1. IN MEETING MARCH 12 WITH AMBASSADOR ROBERT NEUMANN
AND EMBOFF, QUAI DIRECTOR FOR NORTH AFRICA AND LEVANT,
PIERRE CERLESBN SAID THE FRENCH HAVE HEARD FROM AN
EXCELLEN SOURCE THAT A TRICKLE OF CUBANS IS ARRIVING
IN ALGERIA. HE SAID THEY COME IN SMALL GROUPS OF 2,
3, OR 4, BY REGULAR PLANE FLIGHTS, AND THAT THEIR
PRESENCE IS KNOWN BECAUSE THEY TRANSIT "FRIENDLY
COUNTRIES". CERLES DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THE CUBANS
COME DIRECTLY FROM CUBA OR FROM ANGOLA OR SOME OTHER
PLACE IN AFRICA. HE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO GIVE US MORE
DETAILS, INCLUDING NUMBERS AND THE CUBANS' DESTINATION
IN ALGERIA, NEXT WEEK. TERMING THE INFORMATION "HIGHLY
SIGNIFICANT", CERLES SPECULATED THAT THE CUBANS MIGHT

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BE IN ALGERIA TO MAINTAIN SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND

TO MAN MISSILE LAUNCHERS WITHIN THE COUNTRY, BUT
DOUBTED THAT THEY WOULD BE USED OUTSIDE ALGERIA OR ON
THE FRONT LINES IF FIGHTING BREAKS OUT.

2. CERLES ALSO SAID THAT THE FRENCH HAVE HAD RECENT
CONFIRMATION OF ARMS SHIPMENTS FROM LIBYA TO SOUTHERN
ALGERIA. HE SAID THE DELIVERIES, WHICH STOPPED AT THE
END OF FEBRUARY, INCLUDED 60 TO 100 T-54 AND T-62
TANKS, 100 TO 150 MISCELLANEOUS VEHICLES AND 10,000
TONS OF AMMUNITION, ENOUGHT MATERIAL TO EQUIP AN
ARMORED BRIGADE. THE FRENCH DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THE
SUPPLIES WERE FROM LIBYAN STOCKS OR MERELY TRANSITED
LIBYA ON THEIR WAY FROM THE USSR.

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